

THE AMERICAN PHILOSOPHY PRAGMATISM

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THE AMERICAN PHILOSOPHY PRAGMATISM

CRITICALLY CONSIDERED IN RELATION
TO PRESENT-DAY THEOLOGY

BY

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on Damnation," etc.



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PREFACE

The substance of this essay appeared in the primary number of the *Bibliotheca Sacra* for 1909. Most publications since regarding the theme have tended to confirm the author's view that the subject was approached critically in its central position. Gratifying as this conviction was, it entailed also the regret not to have treated the subject somewhat more fully. Considerable additions and some changes have therefore been made in the present little treatise so as to bring together a fairly complete survey of pragmatism in its outstanding characteristics.

The subsequent works of its gifted and scholarly exponent Prof. James plainly bear witness to the fact that the real point at issue is a denial of the supernatural, a discarding of the notion of being, involving a static element. It is a revolt against all tradition, authority and unity; it sets itself against all regulative norms and law. In this central theme are involved all minor points and side issues of the discussion. The intellectual leader, whose labors are now ended, has stated the pragmatic position with his customary clearness, and has endeavored to answer its many critics. Occasionally he has even lost his usual fairness

in dealing with reiterated criticisms, unconvinced and mistaken critics. If it were not that pragmatism appeals especially to the crowd, that it is popular as a temper, a mode of action and method, but that precisely as a system of thought the trained minds have most generally dissented, James's fruitless intellectual efforts might have found ready occasion for one of his German expletives, flinging at the unconverted crowd with comfort to himself, and in vindication of this glorious modern gospel the opprobrium: "Gegen die Dummheit kämpfen sogar die Götter vergebens!"

James would not answer the "amusing, sociological romance" of Prof. Albert Schinz, but tries to give undue importance to many amateur philosophers. Let this not be understood as a depreciation of the great scholar, now gone to his account. Though diametrically opposed to the tendencies advocated and emphasized by him, I read almost every line he ever wrote, simply because he compels recognition as an independent thinker of unusual gifts and scholarship. But exactly on this account I fail to see any justification in his refusal to answer the "amusing sociological romance" of Prof. Schinz, whilst giving evidently undue weight to many befuddled retailers in his wake, because they dabble in the favorite sub-

ject as an established dogma. Instead, it would seem, Prof. James might have easily detected that Mr. Schinz' "Anti-pragmatism" has the flavor of some original, independent effort, which most similar productions lack. It is popular, and does not mean to adhere strictly to a close philosophical reasoning of the system. It goes far afield sometimes, is naturally discursive as being a collection of different articles, but it presents in temper and general argument a strong plea against the tendency known as pragmatism. I would not myself go the whole length with the writer in the claims made for intellect, nor subscribe to the undemocratic reaction to which the author confesses, yet I protest against brushing aside a book so extremely suggestive in its pragmatic treatment of pragmatism.

In sending forth this essay I hope that it may contribute to a more earnest consideration of life's issues, from "Weltanschauung" to "Gottanschauung," that the spirit of truth may lead us into all truth. May many by faith learn Jesus as the truth, and so learn to consecrate themselves to the truth as it is in Jesus!

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Prof. Pierce gave the name pragmatism in a fine article in which he refers to utilitarian tests as the criterion of truth. Prof. James, however, has gradually become the foremost leader in the championing of the cause of pragmatism. His books "Pragmatism," and "The Meaning of Truth," both boldly argue, that truth is *made*, and we are making it. Truth is functional. It is a form of value mediating other values in our experience. We cannot speak any more of truth, but of truths, as there is only question every time of applying a utilitarian test to any judgment, and to consider only that particular case and that particular individual's experience. Schiller raises the query in "Studies in Humanism" (p. 360): "What right have we to assume that even ultimate truth must be one and the same for all? The assumption is no doubt convenient and in a rough and ready way it works." Each one makes his own truth as his experience calls for it, and considers it true so long only as it works; to discard it, when it should seem to him not to "pay." "Our account of truth is an account of truths in the plural, of processes of leading, realized *in rebus*, and

having only this quality in common that they pay," says Prof. James, and he may well exclaim, "Human arbitrariness has driven divine necessity from scientific logic," if this be so. Indeed, after "De gustibus non est disputandum" had been supplanted by "De moribus non est disputandum," we are finally bid to acknowledge that "De veritate non est disputandum"! Prof. Schinz' remark is quite to the point. "Under the pretext of doing the generous thing by individualism, by life, and inspired by a suspicious dread of everything that savors of system and order, they cleave fast to chaos; the lack of co-ordination is raised to the height of a principle" (p. 77, "Anti-pragmatism"). Elsewhere he objects (p. 254).

"Besides minor objections, there is one that was made to pragmatists over and over again, in all sorts of forms, namely that they substitute for the one great philosophical problem of organic, logical, continuous truth a quantity of unconnected problems; or that they substitute for the epistemological problem of truth a moral, if not utilitarian conception of truth, or again that they replace objective truth by subjective truth;—they are all one and the same accusation—why not use William James's frank expression, and say with him, that pragmatists are trying to sub-

stitute a multiverse for a universe?” The objection put in James’s own words, however, does not dispose of the difficulty, for it must be remembered, that James in common with other pragmatists would argue pluralism or polytheism against our monotheistic belief. But especially even the breaking up of the universe into a multiverse does not involve the radical individualism or subjectivism with which its opponents charge pragmatism. This Prof. James tries to meet by admitting that “We believe our percepts are possessed in common.”—“The meaning of truth” (p. 36). This circumstance, however, does merely serve to facilitate intercourse, but does not admit of any regulative norm.

We are therefore still left in subjectivism. For although Prof. James says that, he, of course, admits the reality of the objectivity of our several individual experiences, he will not rest upon this as causal ground, but elevates experience itself into the whole system of things. This is fatal to the whole *Weltanschauung*. It cuts experience asunder from its cause and ground. In his own words, “Though one part of our experience may lean upon another part to make it what it is, in any one of several aspects in which it may be considered, experience as a whole is self-containing and leans on nothing.” Even Eduard von Hartmann

may teach a fuller recognition of the verdicts of our experience, where he says, "Without this faith in the reality and continuity of what we perceive we should be unable to live for a moment, and hence this naïvely-realistic faith, coalescing with the perception itself, by way of intuition, into an indivisible act, forms an indispensable, practically inalienable ingredient of our mental equipment." ("Religionsphilosophie I," pp. 624 ff.) Prof. H. Heath Bawden retails this position of an independent, self-containing experience, in cut-and-dried fashion, along with all other sorts of current notions as the schools give them. He says in "Principles of Pragmatism," "We find ourselves in mid-stream of the Niagara of experience and may define what it is only by working back and forth within the current. We don't know where we are going, but we're on the way" (p. 44).

"Experience is nothing less than the whole system of things. It is a synonym for the universe, for the totality of the diversity of things to which I am in any way related (p. 54)." To-be and to-be experienced come to the same thing. Things are what they are experienced-as. Everything that we experience is equally real. Even illusions are real; they are ideal, as contrasted with actual realities. Reality is experi-

ence. These two words describe the same whole from different points of view. "Reality" emphasizes the content of experience. "Experience" emphasizes the process of reality. The one states what experience is, the other how it proceeds. Physical science has dealt so exclusively with the what, the content, that it has come to treat the facts of the universe as if they existed independently of the process. Psychological science has treated the mental process in abstraction from physical conditions and results, until it has come to assume the existence of a separate world of mind and consciousness distinct from its content. The truth is that there is but one reality; the content of experience. There is but one experience: the process of the evolution of that content. We know nothing of what things are in themselves, apart from a possible experience. There are no thoughts in the abstract. Things are the content of thoughts, while thoughts merely represent the internal metamorphosis of things" (p. 55 ff).

When thus truisms are combined with assertions bolder than the thinkers care to make them, the "*fâcheux troisième*" unwittingly and unwillingly betrays his master's weak point.

It appears here quite plainly that experience is stripped of all meaning, in spite of being boldly

identified with reality. Neither James nor Dewey would present the case as quite so simple, though pragmatism neglects the theory of knowledge and of reality. The pragmatic temper likes to poke fun at the old-fashioned cobwebs of epistemology and ontology. Yet, philosophers of the most varied schools admit that there is only one way to do justice to both subject and object, namely to recognize, that one and the same reason is active in consciousness and in the objective world. On the strength of both being grounded in the same creative wisdom is the reliability of perception and thought assured, a correspondence between the forms of thought and of being.

Fretful and restive under the traditions of the past the spirit of our age has, under the bitter effects of an apotheosis of the evolutionary dogma, blatantly set aside everything which would curb, regulate or control. There are no standards, no norms, no creeds any more. Neither truth nor authority of any sort is to be acknowledged save all-important I. Individualism has come upon us with a vengeance. Democracy has run riot in all spheres. In some sense it repeats the revolutionary watchword: "Ni Dieu, ni maître." Nothing which would constrain, or rule, distinguish and thus divide, is to be tolerated. No static elements, or divisions are allowed any-

where. All ordering rule and regulation is forcible, external, restraint upon the unceasing upward and onward development of man's native endowment and possibilities. It is the burden of the Middle Ages, oppressive with intolerable restrictions to the inner life of man. This leveling democracy aims especially at bringing down the exalted. It is not the true democracy of the elevating spirit of service, which recognizes another as equally good as himself, but rather that which knows no superiors, in which everybody is as good as anybody else. Irreverence is its mainspring, moved by a bold self-importance, ignorant of, and indifferent in regard to the inheritance of the past, it lays therefore impious hands upon everything to use it, or wantonly to destroy it. This may seem a severe characterization, and I would not include the more earnest spirits, who challenge the faith of old, or the age-long social traditions of our fathers. But I do fling this reproach at those who denounce what they never took the trouble to know, who parade truisms as great discoveries, and make these a pretext for opposition to the traditional faith or philosophy which all these years had a far richer and fuller understanding than the superficial glimpse of truth which gives the vaunted new truth any importance at all.

“Der moderne Mensch” is perhaps hardly aware that he often argues against imaginary caricatures of his own mind, when he presents the old as external, mechanical and formal, as against the new as inward, organic and living. This is a wholly unwarranted assumption. I wish to instance for the benefit of this one-sided procedure of liberal minds Canon H. S. Holland’s felicitous account of the organic relation which reason bears to the man, his experience and his milieu. And these references occur in sermonic addresses, published under the title “Logic and Life.” “Faith is not made by argument.” It seeks, indeed, for a rational solution of life’s mysteries; it grows through gaining hold of them; “The depth said, It is not in me.” Not from things without, but from the heart within, cometh wisdom: there, in the inner places of the soul, in the secret will with which a man fears the Lord, and departs from evil, is the true place of spiritual understanding.” (Preface.) “Reason is regarded, not in its isolated character as an engine with which every man starts equipped, capable of doing a certain job when required, with a definite and certain mode of action; but it is taken as a living and pliable process by and in which man brings himself into rational and intelligent relation with his surroundings, with his experi-

ence. Reason is the slowly formed power of harmonizing the world of facts; and its justification lies, not in its deductive certainty so much as in its capacity to *advance*. It proves its trustworthiness by its power to grow. Reason moves towards its place, its fulfillment, so far as it settles itself into responsive agreement with the facts covered by its activity. We have to do, more or less, with the actual construction and reasoning organ itself. This construction is alive, and every instant sees it change: it is no isolated faculty where workings can continue, or be watched *in vacuo*; as we can watch the movements of a machine even when it has no material to work upon. Rather is it to be held in unbroken connection with the facts on which it works, for only in relation to them is its success, its truth, obvious or verifiable, or intelligible. Everything depends on the character of the facts before him, and on the nature of his main experiences. The excellence of a piece of reasoning lies simply in its adaptive facility, in the response it evolves between those particular new impressions and the mass of older and habitual experiments. Change the facts, or the experience, and its excellence disappears,—it becomes unintelligible. Only in intimate and undivided communion with the facts which they express, have the announcements of the reason,

on any field of knowledge, any intelligible value; and no one therefore, who does not live, and move, and have his being, in constant intercourse with the spirit life can enter into the deep necessities of its laws." "The reason in man is human; that is all we mean. It is under a man's impulse that it argues and discusses; it is part and parcel of his corporate and complex existence. The whole long chain of its syllogisms is never mechanical; it is alive along all its length, and feels at every joining the throbbing currents of his moving life. Does it follow that, since reason derives its use and force from the particular man who works it, all thinking is therefore purely individual—the peculiar property of each separate, rational soul? Is not the exercise of thought one long and delightful discovery of the identity that knits us up into the main body of mankind? Men are indeed of one heart and one mind, and might have all things, if they would, in common. It is we ourselves who are discovered in the common, the universal necessities of thought; it is we ourselves and not merely our "laws of thought," who are then discovered to be at one with our fellow-men, to be bound up with them into a union so radical that we call it "necessary," so irrevocable that we call it "absolute." (From "Logic and Life" and "Venture of Reason.")

When Professor McCosh of Princeton fame wished for a specific American, a national philosophy, one which should be distinctively characteristic of our land, he little anticipated the speedy realization of his desire, still less the particular nature of that philosophy which, with some reservations, may be fairly called American. Pragmatism is a specifically American Weltanschauung, a philosophic wisdom which as such is formulated and sustained on our native soil. It not only fits the temper of the great republic, but it has found here nurture, development, and formulation. It has endeavored to give an account of itself, to justify itself in a consistent way. Professor Pierce, Professor James, and Professor Dewey are the representatives of this school.

The evolutionary theories influenced potently ethical conceptions; especially did they affect the attitude towards the inherited wisdom of tradition, as represented in dogmas, creeds, laws, teachings, etc. Evolution will not be fettered by the worn-out *superstitio* of the past; it faces the present and looks hopefully to the future. Things are not static, they evolve; and from the various interplays emerge the things that are to supersede those that have had their day. "History," said Höffding, "is the great voting-place for standards of value." We that are making history,

subject to the process of development, are therefore concerned with regulative standards. Where are they found, and what part are they to play in our life? In no department of study are displayed more amazingly superficial explanations than in the current views held about the evolutionary doctrines. Of course there are different views, and justly so. Darwin put side by side in the accounts of his theory the famous phrases "struggle for existence" and "natural selection," which coöperating factors result in the "survival of the fittest." It is safe to say that in the subsequent discussions of the evolutionary theories it has been agreed that the latter factor, "natural selection," has been overemphasized. The assumption in the underlying natural selection is the reasonableness of the universe, that is to say this is necessary, if the development is working at all to a specific end.

But it will be seen that this factor, made prominent at the expense of the individual agencies which play their part in the *milieu* of the given determining environment, assumes also the function of the individual. This evolutionary philosophy becomes thereby strictly monistic. The "struggle for existence" and "natural selection" are one. Self-determination is an illusion. We are driftwood on the evolutionary currents.

Our discrimination as to the obligatory control of the less evolved feelings by the more evolved ones is imaginary. Moral wisdom is to be displaced by passive adaptability to environment. However, the categorical "ought" is not so easily disposed of, nor yet is the undeniable verdict of personal integrity. Man does function with free will as a responsible rational being, and as he responds in his choices to his environment so is he responsible. He cannot let go of himself, and let this evolutionary process develop him. We, therefore, are thrown back on a guiding principle by which we may conduct ourselves in the affairs of life. But as all things are in the making, as much as we ourselves, yea, as even Almighty God has been proclaimed to be in the process of becoming, we can only get an *unfinished* code, a provisional standard, to be outgrown by and by. Truth is to be used, involves an interaction of means and ends, mediates between different values in experience, and thus becomes merely functional. The regulative standard, which we adopt to judge our actions, is subjected to these very actions to which we carry it for a successful approach. It is much like Adam striding across the stage to be created. We are left to work out our tasks in a world of pure experience. James tells us: "Whether experience itself is due to

something independent of all possible experience is a question that pragmatism declines to answer." (Art. "Humanism and Truth," *Mind* (New Series) vol. lii, p. 463.)

Truth becomes on this pragmatic basis a relation between different parts of experience. This, however, is a vague and unsatisfactory definition of the greatest and central purpose of all philosophy, viz., to search for the principles by which reason may obtain a true knowledge of things. We are constrained therefore to inquire about this relation between the more and the less fixed parts of experience, if this pragmatic truth is to guide us, instead of the obsolete truth which pretended to be sufficiently true and reliable, to the trans-empirical reality known in experience. For, indeed, we still believe with Prof. Bavinck: "In the knowledge of the truth lies the end of its revelation; reality is an instrument to enable us to find the truth; reality is intended to become truth in our consciousness and in our experience. Reality, therefore, does not offer us in the truth a mere copy of itself, so that the world, as pragmatism objects, would be duplicated. In the truth, reality rises to a higher mode of existence; having first lain in darkness, it now walks in the light; having once been a riddle, it now finds its solution; not understood at the begin-

ning, it is now 'declared.' So the truth obtains an independent value of its own. Its standard does not lie in its usefulness for life, for if usefulness were the criterion of truth, then perfect unanimity ought to prevail in regard to usefulness, and life itself ought to be a value not subject to fluctuation. But in regard to life, what counts is not merely existence, or pleasure, or intensity, but first of all content and quality. And it is precisely by truth that this content and quality are determined. The truth is of more value than empirical life. Christ sacrificed his life for it. None the less by doing so he regained his life. Truth is worth more than reality; it belongs to that higher order of things in which physis, and gnosis, and ethos are reconciled, and in which a true philosophy gives full satisfaction both to the demands of the intellect and to the needs of the heart." ("The Philosophy of Revelation," p. 82.) Prof. James and his pragmatic confrères, however, try to dispense with this normative truth, standing high in eternal authority over the knower and the known. In the dialogue with which "The meaning of truth" closes, he states this quite plainly.

Says the Pragmatist:

"It seems to me that what the knowledge knows is the fact itself, the event or whatever the reality

may be. Where you see three distinct entities in the field, the reality, the knowing, and the truth, I see only two. Moreover I can see what each of my two entities is known-as, but when I ask myself what your third entity, the truth, is known-as, I can find nothing distinct from the reality on the one hand, and the ways in which it may be known on the other. Are you not probably misled by common language, which has found it convenient to introduce a hybrid name, meaning sometimes a kind of knowing and sometimes a reality known, to apply to either of these things interchangeably? And has philosophy anything to gain by perpetuating and consecrating the ambiguity? If you call the object of knowledge 'reality,' and call the manner of its being cognized 'truth,' cognized moreover on particular occasions, and variously, by particular human beings who have their various businesses with it, and if you hold consistently to this nomenclature, it seems to me that you escape all sorts of trouble."

It is everywhere asserted that the assumption of thought was too bold.

Pragmatism rises upon the breakdown of the old representative view of knowledge. Professor Dewey, in an address, calls attention to the fact that Kant's famous dictum, "Perception without

conception is blind, conception without perception is empty," has resulted in a deadlock. He urges a return to the *meaningful* aspect of knowledge — we are to consider for what end it is itself there. And his answer is: —

"The individual must work a definite and controllable tool. This tool is science. But this very fact constituting the dignity of science and measuring the importance of the philosophic theory of knowledge, conferring upon them the religious value once attaching to dogma, and the disciplinary significance once belonging to political rules, also sets their limit. The servant is not above his master. When a theory of knowledge forgets that its value rests in solving the problem *out of which it has arisen*, viz., that of *securing a method of action*; when it forgets that it has to work out the conditions under which the individual may freely direct himself without loss of the historic value of civilization — when the nature and method of knowledge are fairly understood, then interest must transfer itself from the possibility of knowledge to its application to life. . . . The Kantian epistemology has formulated the claims of both schools in defining the judgments as the relation of perception and conception. But when he goes on to state that this relation is itself knowledge, he stultifies himself. Knowledge can define the percept and elaborate the concept, but their union can be found only in action. The experimental method of modern science, its erec-

tion into the ultimate mode of verification, is simply this fact obtaining recognition" (John Dewey, "The Significance of the Problem of Knowledge").

It is in place to remark at this juncture that in this statement there are a few assumptions which require a more elaborate justification than pragmatism has yet been able to give. For one thing, it goes without saying that even theoretic knowledge is not detached, and we do well to remember here that Kant's philosophic thinking did not limit itself to the "Critique of Pure Reason," but included the "Critique of Practical Reason" and the "Critique of Judgment." In fact, Kant's own testimony was that he not so much had given to the world a completed system of philosophy as materials on which subsequent thinkers might build. In his preface to the "Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Ethics," Kant gives as his opinion that "it must, after all, be one and the same reason which is at work, only applied differently." This is exactly what Fichte did with Kant's material. Unifying the conception of the theoretical and the practical reasons as they appear in Kant, Fichte subsumes all reality under the unity of life, whether in knowledge or merely in existence, whilst for Kant self-consciousness is only the unity to which all human knowledge is referred.

So the explanation of things is in their τέλος, not in the imperfect time-beginnings. The phenomenal world of sensibility relates therefore not to a "*Ding an Sich*," a contradictory, unrelated noumenon, but its true disclosure is in the world of duty within. This true noumenon is the real final cause. And subsequent ethical study has corroborated the dictum that "Our deepest insights into the heart of reality are of an ethical nature." Kant's "*Ding an Sich*," we may say, was by Fichte deduced from the necessity of the moral consciousness. Things in themselves are "as we have to make them." Fichte's idealism does not claim to be dogmatic but practical, determining not what is, but what ought to be. This position he argued strongly in his unfortunate atheistic controversy at Jena, identifying God with the moral world-order: —

"That there is a moral order of the world, which assigns to each rational individual his determined place and counts on his work, is most certain, nay, is the ground of all other certitude. The living and operative moral order (*ordo ordinans*) is itself God; we need no other God, and can conceive no other. There is no ground in reason for going beyond this world-order to postulate a particular being as its cause." (Fichte, in preface, "The Development of the Concept of Religion," to Forberg's article in the

Philosophische Journal "On the Ground of our Belief in Divine Government.")

This pantheism of an all-pervading *Zielstrebigkeit*, to be espoused by man, is much in keeping with evolutionary teachings. And it is worthy of note that Fichte deduced the theoretical knowledge from the practical. Fichte counted himself primarily a man of practical interest. As for Kant the suprasensible is an assumption concerning that which *is* in behalf of that which ought to be, so for Fichte the *ego* limits itself in order to overcome the limitation, the theoretical is only in behalf of the practical, or that which is exists only because of what ought to be.

It is easily seen that this teaching of the duty of unremitting exertion appeals to people who have work to do. America, untrammelled by much tradition, with a constant demand for work, specially welcomes the doctrine of "the strenuous life," as in matter of fact it practices the same. Ex-president Theodore Roosevelt has taken up this motto with predilection and expects great things from it for the nation, because America is engaged in the making of a civilization and has yet great tasks before it. In this plastic civilization, action, even at the risk of taking chances,

must needs be the paramount issue in life. Reflection and meditation are out of place. They fit rather an established order of things. The inactive wisdom of leisurely culture is a wasteful expenditure of human energies, capacity gone to seed. Not what do you know, but what can you do, and what are you prepared to do, is the American requirement. Latent energy, contemplating wisdom, granted it is there, merits derision and scorn in the land of hustling activity, when it is not applied, not practiced. Knowledge is only in order to be more effective. "Not only know, but also practice what you know." It must be serviceable, as it is subservient to the tasks and needs of life. But these tasks and needs dictate and call out, they are favorites who respond promptly to accept them. Those who compute and theorize about the facts of life are not in demand. Prof. Schinz draws a strong picture of the American spirit for restless activity and democratic claims in his "Anti-pragmatism."

Professor Münsterberg, an observing psychologist, in "The Americans" calls attention to the fact of this imperious demand to shape the things that come to hand: —

"The freely acting individual must not be prevented by a stronger force from using the strength

he has. Everything which excludes free competition and makes the individual economically helpless seems immoral to the American. That is old Anglo-Saxon law.

“If the whole outward life is pervaded by this pioneer spirit of self-initiative there is another factor which is not to be overlooked; it is the neglect of the æsthetic. Anyone who loves beauty desires to see his ideal realized at the present moment, and the present itself becomes for him expressive of the past, while the man whose only desire is to be active as an economic factor looks only into the future. The bare present is almost valueless, since it is that which has to be overcome. It is the material which the enterprising spirit has to shape creatively into something else. The pioneer cannot be interested in the present as a survivor of the past; it shows to him only that which is to do, and admonishes his soul to prepare for new achievements. On Italian soil one's eye is offended by every false note in the general harmony. The present, in which the past still lives, fills one's consciousness, and the repose of æsthetic contemplation is the chief emotion. But a man who rushes from one undertaking to another seeks no unity or harmony in the present; his retina is not sensitive to ugliness, because his eye is forever peering into the future; and if the present were to be complete and finished, the enterprising spirit would regret such perfection and account it a loss — a restriction of his freedom, an end to his creation. It

would mean mere pleasure and not action. In this sense the American expresses his pure idealism in speaking of the 'glory of the imperfect.' "

Rudyard Kipling, in his poem "An American," hits off the predominant American pragmatic trait of disregard for knowledge and law in the face of the supreme commands of "the instant need of things." He is making a civilization and shall meet the case; he rises to the occasion, and expects to be equal to it when it presents itself; he crosses the bridge when he gets there, and wastes no time in schemes and plans beforehand. He underrates such procedure as unpractical; for if his theoretic method may not be called for by use, there is an entire waste, and if required, law and method are only learned *in* the act, at the hand of life's requirements as experience teaches them. Kipling, long resident in America, lets the American Spirit therefore speak:—

"The cynic devil in his blood
That bids him mock his hurrying soul;
That bids him flout the Law he makes,
That bids him make the Law he flouts.

.

He turns a keen untroubled face
Home, to the instant need of things.

.

Lo! imperturbable he rules,
Unkempt, disreputable, vast —
And, *in the teeth of all the schools*
I — I shall save him at the last! ”

The American spirit is removed by whole diameters from the mood of the soliloquizing Hamlet, whose meditative, reflecting mood kept him irresolute and inactive. Mr. Beck, in a lecture on Hamlet, brought this very lesson strikingly home as a wise counsel to the students of Princeton, urging this splendid body of young men to bear in mind the injunction,—

“ Let us then be up and doing
With a heart for any fate;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labor and to wait,”

lest

“ The native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o’er with the pale cast of thought;
And enterprises of great pith and moment,
With this regard, their currents turn awry,
And lose the name of *action*. ”

Prof. Henry van Dyke observes in his lectures at the Sorbonne on “ The Spirit of America,”
“ There is a spirit in the air which constantly cries, Act, act! ”

“Let us still be up and doing.”

The gentle voice of that other spirit which whispers, “Consider, that thou mayest be wise,” is often unheard or unheeded (p. 137). This “Get up and do something!” is the American’s profound faith in the theme of Faust, that

“The ever-active, striving soul
Works out his own salvation.”

Faust in the translating of John’s Gospel writes first: “In the beginning was the *Word*”; then, “In the beginning was the *Thought*”; after which he tries, “In the beginning was the *Power*”; but, feeling the Spirit’s aid, it becomes clear to him to write boldly, “In the Beginning was the *Act*.”

Fichte’s view of the world as the theater on which the moral destiny of man is to be wrought out, the world as the sphere and object of human activity, fits in with the American temper. We are immediately certain of the law of duty, the world becomes only a reality to us by means of that previous certainty. Life begins with action, not with thought. We do not act because we know, but we know because we are to act. By this free determination in the effort after moral perfection, we lay hold on Eternal Life. But this world of duty is infinite, every finite exertion has a definite aim, but beyond it appears still a higher.

It is well to consider here the remark of Forberg in "Fragmente aus meinen Papieren" (Dec. 7, 1794). He writes: —

"Fichte seems really determined to work upon the world through his philosophy. The tendency to restless activity which dwells in the breast of every noble youth he would carefully nourish and cultivate that it may in due season bring forth fruit. He seizes upon every opportunity of teaching that action — action — is the vocation of man. Strictly speaking, this principle is false. Man is not called upon to act, but to act justly; if he cannot act without acting unjustly, he had better remain inactive."

And it has indeed been asserted that ignorant good-will has caused more harm in the world than deliberate wickedness. It may be urged that in this consideration the problem of knowledge is not kept strictly theoretic; and if by this is meant a disinterested, indifferent view as to knowledge, the remark is quite to the point. It is exactly the strength of the pragmatic attitude that it brings practical considerations into view with regard to knowledge, that bear directly on the volitional life, and thus involves moral considerations.

As we directed attention to the influence of the evolutionary theory on the pragmatic thought and attitude, we may now state the analogous relation here more definitely.

Pragmatism, looking toward results in the *milieu* of the agent's activity, entertains a favorable bias towards guidance by outside influences, surroundings, environment. Forthcoming results hold the key to, and the criterion of, truth. Of course, it is not asserted that the individual response is merely mechanical, but the more complete the response, the more fully guiding truth is to be found in the environment. Barring the discussion of the metaphysical implications of his famous theory, as does Darwin himself in the following, "Natural selection depends on the survival, under various and complex circumstances, of the best-fitted individuals, but has no relation whatever to the primary *cause* of any modification of structure," we find that Darwin's hypothesis directs attention exclusively to *results*, the *effects* of natural selection between variations, but concerns itself little with the *origin* of variations. However, in the purpose disclosed in results, in the effects aimed at, we see a close relation to their cause. Being is disclosed in the doing. Effect leads back to cause, as much as cause points to result. What ought to be lies behind all that is as its first cause, its *raison d'être*, and in time before all existence as its final cause. First and final cause are but two aspects of the same thing, the nature of which the ethical world of *ends* dis-

closes more truly than does the study of origins.

The teaching of the utilitarian school of ethics, which evaluates conduct in results computed to be conducive to "the greatest happiness of the greatest number" under the assumption that individual happiness and permanent total happiness coincide, was reproduced in less static form, and without the attempt to forecast results. The subjective reference was made of less account as the objective reference assumed greater importance. The evolutionary hypothesis, elevated into a metaphysical dogma, has been worked out in monistic fashion, reducing the subjective importance and all that goes with it. Knowledge becomes more an indication, an expression, of evolutionary development than an individual, initiatory reaction upon environment. Still, the instincts have been called to account, and emotions and will have been given intellectual interpretation. This circumstance is witness to the fact that strong individual responsibility is felt, that the individual must justify intellectually his actions as a rational, free agent. Therefore, even if all the world, including man, exhibits *Zielstrebigkeit*, yet it is left with the individual to adjust, to fit in the two aspects of the same thing, the nature of which is the ethical scheme of things. Judgment has

to be exercised; one cannot plunge himself into the evolutionary currents and expect to be evolved as he knows and feels he *ought* to be developed. The ought-to-be is not as explicitly *with* us as it is *before* us, however much the final cause asserts itself in consciousness as the first cause. Kant says in his "Critique of Judgment":—

"Judgment in general is the faculty of thinking the particular as contained under the universal. If the universal, this is, the rule, the principle, or law, is given, the judgment which subsumes the particular under it is *determinant*. But if only the particular is given, for which the universal has to be found, the judgment is merely *reflective*. The principle of judgment, in its relation to the forms of things which come under empirical laws in general, is thus the idea that in all its manifold variety *nature is purposive*. That is to say, nature is conceived as if the unity of its manifold empirical laws were due to an intelligence."

Now, in his "Critique of Practical Reason," Kant says that finite intelligence may gather the meaning of this Universe-purpose, of this Infinite Intelligence that framed the order of things in which we find ourselves. Pure Reason cannot provide information as to the specific forms and contents for our conduct. As such it is neutral, may serve in the service of the good and the evil with equal capacity. The intellect has forsooth often been

a veritable *advocatus diaboli* when *advocatus diaboli*.

Intellect fails in supplying authority to our will, as it lacks wisdom to survey the situation *exhaustively*, to see the part as related to the whole. Hence Practical Reason, the conscience, leads us. He raises the question whether our knowledge, then, is actually enlarged by practical reason, and that which is for speculative reason *transcendent*, is *immanent* for practical reason. He answers, "Undoubtedly it is, *but only in relation to action*." This charge has been insistently urged against pragmatism, that it endeavors to reduce the pure reason to the practical reason.

What Kant left divided appears in Fichte united, and in the pragmatic frame of mind successful action as the test of life's wisdom is manifestly the only criterion. Now, in the evolutionary theory natural selection in showing results leads to the recognition that not every adaptation, not every form of struggle, is permitted. Mankind is led from lower to higher forms of struggle, and from the vantage ground thus gained we may see and estimate the worth of the less developed forms. This goes of course on the assumption that history is fraught with purpose. The pragmatic faith in the essential rationality of the universe is not primarily exer-

cised because of the deliverance of the inner world in response to the underlying meanings of the world, but — and it would seem rather illogical unless a thoroughgoing monism is accepted, as is not generally done — because the outer world and its doings is a corrective educator, yea is formative of the inner world. Baldwin argues this ably. He says: —

“The pragmatist must either frankly swallow the camel of a real environment which the knowledge-function may then both truthfully and also erroneously reflect — a step which would involve him in all the epistemological litigation of the representative theories of knowledge — or he must find some guarantee for the reality of the mental principle which is not ‘rein pragmatisch.’ This latter is the better course; the present writer adopts it as a limitation on his pragmatism.” (“The Limits of Pragmatism.”)

That the world without is creative of mind and psychical process, has been too often refuted to deserve consideration, and, as we had occasion to remark, was deliberately ignored by Darwin, whatever may be the implications, if indeed evolution is elevated into a metaphysical dogma. Darwin declared the origin of life an insoluble problem and would so certainly declare the origin of conscious life. At any rate there is no metapsychic, as we cannot get a $\pi\omicron\upsilon\bar{\nu}$ $\sigma\tau\omega$, and we are demonstrably

ignorant as to the relation of mind and matter.

The implication of a continuity in experience leads us logically back to the position that an *exhaustive* knowledge of the past enables us to forecast exactly the future, as Tennyson expresses it so tersely in "The flower in the crannied wall." Of course we do not know exhaustively, but this raises a question of proportion, and not of disagreement or possible discrepancy between past and future. It is not to be admitted that our knowledge must be discredited because it is incomplete.

This argument against pragmatism, however, falls to the ground when the bolder evolutionists bring consciousness within the sphere of evolution. Then this continuity is broken up, or rather, not allowed. As Woodbridge remarks in an admirable paper on Evolution, before the Philosophical Club: —

"If in consciousness we have the process of evolution itself become conscious, we have grounds for claiming to have an immediate experience of what evolution is. That process would thus appear to be, not the unfolding of a past, but the successive achievements of an effective present whose achievements have the character and value they disclose wherever they become apparent or are realized."

The antithesis of pragmatism between thinking and "concrete ways of living," on the other hand, comes in for much severer criticism on this theory, for then thought processes should surely be allowed far more claim than the pragmatists allow. Indeed in such a scheme of pantheistic, evolutionary monism, thought itself, so far from being subservient, becomes the highest product and end of the universe. Hegel insisted on interpreting the cause by its effect, the lower by the higher forms. He could derive therefore little help from the untried experiences in which resides the unassimilated wisdom, for the sake of which pragmatism is ready to sacrifice the overbold assumptions of traditional knowledge. However, his panlogism, not yet worked into thoroughgoing evolutionism, contained practically all the future in the past. Only on the strength of this circumstance could he work the bold deductions of his trichotomy, but it held him also to the boundless assumption of the Immanent Dialectic stated in his "Logic": —

"Philosophy of the Absolute is a representation of God as He was in His eternal essence before the creation of the world or of a finite spirit; as all things were made by Him, and He is before all things and by Him all things consist."

This is the excessive claim of the panlogistic motto: "Whatever is real is rational, and whatever is rational is real." It is as much in contradiction to this bold assumption of the identity of thought and being, which makes the laws of thought the laws of things, as in the opposition to the rigid fixity of a static view of things, that pragmatism has found especial favor. The pragmatist considers time as a mode of pragmatically derived reality, and makes it real in the same sense that other abstract or conceptual modes are. Thus he can deny the reality of future, undiscovered possibilities of existence, viewing them simply as projections from realities already with us. In the doing of things, in action, the restraint of plan is laid aside; it never fits exactly because logic-chopping reflects a too narrow view of this various, rich world, which besides is in the *making*. The old world-view, however, observes, Yes: in the making, but in the theme a structure of God's eternal plan. Against Pierce's emphatic declaration, "What all modern philosophy does is to deny that there is any *esse in futuro*," we quote Psalm cxxxix, 15-16:—

"My frame was not hidden from thee,
When I was made in secret,
And curiously wrought in the lowest parts of
the earth.

Thine eyes did see mine imperfect substance,
And in thy book were all my members written,
Which day by day were fashioned,
When as yet there was none of them."

In no particular situation can the logical problem be defined, because thought reaches out beyond it, fitting the part into the whole. On this point, Baldwin observes: "I think pragmatism is not able as such to explain the general or 'universal' aspects of reality." ("Limits of Pragmatism.") Prof. Urban says in this connection:—

"While the concrete details of empirical knowledge may be due to 'utility selection,' as practicable 'work-ables,' yet the structural principles of thought cannot be so accounted for. They have no application as generals, and so would for the pragmatist have no 'adequate' reason for being." (*Psychological Review*, July, 1897.)

On this point indeed, pragmatism fails most signally to give a satisfactory account of itself, for something underived, not man-made, not floating on the tide of experience is needed as ground for it all. In the midst of the ever-changing stream of experience looms up the specter of the changeless, in time the timeless, in nature the supernatural. It matters not how fanatically order is fought, how arduously and persistently

freedom from all restraint is proclaimed, this world is thereby not unsettled. God still rules it. Nor can the creature reverse God's order, or his own nature, for God created him in His own image. Professor Creighton observed well in "The Nature and Criterion of Truth": "The view, then, which I am endeavoring to state, and which I think has been established by the historical development of philosophical conceptions, maintains that the relation between the mind and reality is essentially inner and organic. Experience throughout all its modes is the expression of this unity in difference. The function of thought is 'to determine concretely and still in universal terms the real word.'" ("Phil. Rev. XVII.," p. 600.)

We call here also attention to the point urged by Prof. Josiah Royce in an able discussion regarding the defective psychology of pragmatism. Prof. Royce disposed of its abusive treatment of deductive reasoning by showing the fecundity of syllogism in life. Instead of reproducing simply an obvious conclusion from the premise, the use of syllogism rests upon the laying bare how one set of relations rests upon another. Further, that the proof-element is truly present, if the propositions are not, as is usually done, taken for granted, but considered in their affirmative as-

pect. He suggests that the 'concept of probability' would serve the pragmatic principle better than the time-honored name of truth, which proves in its service so provisional as to become a misnomer. Prof. Royce, limiting his discussion to the psychology of pragmatism, shows conclusively its weakness even in what is considered its strongest point.

Pragmatism, then, asserts itself strenuously in reducing both time-honored claims of knowledge as reliable, though merely representative and incomplete. Inasmuch as progress looks forward, we cannot carry the past into the future, nor may we mortgage the future with the past. Just as life is richer than thought, so is the universal, absolute truth — if it were there already as a formed, final quantity — larger and vaster than our understanding of it, or what limited experience can disclose. This latter pragmatic view is well defined by James Mark Baldwin in "The Limits of Pragmatism," a paper read before the Joint Seminars, Department of Philosophy, Princeton University, December 1, 1903. Says Professor Baldwin:—

"Broadly speaking, inquiries are pragmatic which, with more or less thoroughness, make such conceptions as thought, existence, truth, reality, etc., relative to antecedents, consequences, modes of function, ends. All such determinations are not only ends reached in

a movement, but *also* means yet to be reached; and all of them, considered thus functionally, as terms of genetic organization, in so far forbid definition in a static, absolute, once-for-all, fixed system."

It asserts that pragmatically determined cognitions of truth exhaust all of reality.

But is pragmatism able to construct reality retrospectively? Is reality given in any system of concrete, practically derived truths? Or does there always stand over a remainder, a puzzling *tertium quid*, an *esse in futuro*? Professor Höffding argues in his "Problems of Philosophy": —

"As the concept of purpose depends on the concept of worth, so also the concept of the *norm* depends on the concept of purpose. The norm is the rule for the activity which is necessary to attain the purpose. It was a fatal thing for the treatment of the problem of worth when Immanuel Kant reversed the relation and tried to derive the concepts of purpose from the concept of the norm (of law). This is a psychological impossibility."

We must observe against this that the notion of a derived "norm" is contradictory. Höffding's norms are not metaphysical, ultimate considerations: they are utilitarian worth-estimates within the temporal sphere. It is also psychologically

unsound to speak of a "derived norm." Whatever figures truly as a norm has the authority of an evaluating standard, is primordial, underived. I cannot refrain from quoting here my honored teacher, Professor W. Brenton Greene, of Princeton, who says in his admirable sketch of "Christian Doctrine": —

"The law in the violation or neglect of which sin consists is not our own happiness, nor the greatest good of the greatest number of beings, nor yet the eternal fitness of things, nor even our own reason: it is that toward which all these point and on obedience to which all these depend, the law of God, the expressed will of Him whose nature is, as we saw, both the ground and the standard of right (Rom. ii, 15; iii, 19).

"How God's operation can always be thus congruous with the nature of all His creatures and with all the laws of their action will appear when we remember, that God has planned whatever comes to pass and constituted whatever is (Eph. i.; John i, 3), that the essence of everything and the relations of all things are comprehended by Him (Ps. cxxxix.; Heb. iv, 13), and that He is ever present and active within the inmost constitution of all things (Acts xvii, 28).

Let it therefore be plainly understood that the will of God is our underived norm, Christ the supreme law of life.

‘ Our wills are ours we know not how;
Our wills are ours to make them thine.’

Will and purpose are but different aspects of the individual response to the norm, which always was acknowledged in the sincere petition, ‘ Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.’ ”

It seems to be exactly the crux of the whole matter that human will endeavors to usurp the authority which rightly belongs to Him who is Creator and Judge of his creatures. The element of faith cannot be dispensed with, it is central, even in the exercise of reason. In vindication of the old theology I would quote again from the same work of Dr. Greene:—

“ In God, as in us, there is a distinction between will and power (Eph. i, 9). He does not do all that He can; He does only what He has purposed. Because God is self-determined or free, He cannot purpose contrary to His nature any more than we can (2 Tim. ii, 13). He has power enough to do wrong, but He lacks the will to do it; and He could not will to act wrongly or unreasonably; for His self or nature is perfectly righteous and reasonable. God is ever all that He Himself ought to be, and He never appoints for any of His creatures less than ought to be appointed or more than may rightly be appointed (Dan. ix, 14; Rom. ii, 5, 6). This is so because He is essentially and necessarily righteous. He does not

determine what is right arbitrarily; He expresses and illustrates it naturally; for it is the most vital element of His life. Whatever He wills, therefore, is right; for He can will only in accordance with His nature, and this is the right itself. Hence what God is, is both the ground and the standard of right. What God is, is right, and we ought to do right because of what God is (Lev. xix, 2; Matt. v, 48)."

B. Bosanquet, the well-known English philosopher, observed against the pragmatic view (and in his controversy with J. M. Baldwin he classes the genetic views along with it):—

"The formation of new reality seems to me a contradiction in terms; but the discovery of reality new to us, and the adaptation of intelligence to it, is surely a fact which no one has ever denied, and which in general is hardly worth affirming, but if the genetic point of view means (*a*) that new reality is not merely discovered, but created, that action on the external world, and social selection, are the determinants and criteria of truth, then I fear there can be no truth between us."

It is in fact exactly the point, not "How do we come to think something"; but what is the *test* of its truth? Baldwin argues this close relation of *genesis* and *nature* in an able article, "The Origin of a Thing and its Nature" (*Psychological Review*, 1895), which appears in substance in his

“ Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology ” under the subject “ Origin *versus* Nature.” He is quite felicitous in bringing out the *retrospective* and *prospective* reference involved in the opposing views, which obtain as much in every branch of science as they do in the field of philosophy, history, and theology. Baldwin quotes with approval Lotze’s position that the problem of philosophy is to inquire what reality is, not how it is made,

“ If we only remember,” says he, “ that we must exhaust the empirical ‘ how ’ to get a notion of the empirical ‘ what,’ and that there still remains over the ‘ prospect ’ which the same author has hit off in his famous saying: ‘ Reality is richer than thought.’ To desiderate a what which has no how — this seems as contradictory as to ask for a how in terms of what is not.”

He commits himself to a possible solution in what he calls “ æsthetic idealism,” giving the following *tentative propositions*. He says in substance: —

“ Of the great historical solutions, that of the intellectualists leans to the retrospective, that of the voluntarists to the prospective; a consistent effective theory has never been worked out — æsthetic experience being made the metaphysical prius both of science and of value.”

“ 1. All statements of the nature of ‘things’ get their matter *mainly* from the processes which they have been known to pass through: that is, statements of nature *are for the most part* statements of origin.

“ 2. Statements of origin, however, never *exhaust* the reality of a theory, since such statements cannot be true to the experiences which they state unless they construe the reality not only as a thing which has had a career, but also as one which is about to have a career (*which of course cannot be done*); for the expectation of the future career rests upon and is produced by the same historical series as the belief in the past career.”

Along with the italicizing of some clauses we would remark here, that the ultimate interpretation of even the lowest cannot be given except on principles that will also explain the very highest. An evolutionism which, like Spencer's, tries to explain the complex in terms of the simple, the heterogeneous from homogeneous, leads us back to an undifferentiated mode of existence where Hegel might step in to proclaim his “being equal to non-being.” In fact, we must disallow that the “what” of a thing is given *wholly* or *only* in its behavior, a thing *is* not exactly what it *does*, its reality is not exhausted in its functions. There is a *tertium quid*, a residuum which Professor Baldwin freely recognizes, but honors not enough.

Indeed, no event begins or ends, but a process is always going on, reality is or includes a time-process. If then we take any time-process and consider its beginning, we are dealing with a partial fact that requires thought to connect it with the reality as a whole. We indeed want "to see life steadily, and see it whole." For the cause of the origin of a process, therefore, we must look in *two* directions: *both to its results and antecedents*. Unless we are two-faced Januses we must focus the twofold reference *in* the present event, must, indeed, believe reality is there. Experience, so far from shutting us out from "*das Ding an Sich*," brings us in touch with reality. "*Das Sein hat Dasein*." There being no metapsychic we believe reality as directly disclosed. The pagan idea of a causal series *ad infinitum* finds nowadays little favor with philosophic thinkers. This law of causality confesses that it never arrives at its true originating cause, and the boasted law, "Every event has its cause," therefore is to be put out of court on its own showing.

And here the old school is in order with its affirmation that thought not only reveals reality, but is a unique mode of reality itself. Of course this need not be pushed to the extreme of Hegel's fundamental identity of thought and reality. Yet, the development of thought *is* a mode of

reality, which is to be realized in the system of thought in which we share. In raising the question of the ultimate origin of the universe, do we not require a *tertium quid* to yet antecedent history to get the very first beginnings agoing? Where does that come in? It means purpose, will, τέλος, end, aim. It means all that *science as a descriptive function* emphatically disallows, when the term science is limited very rigidly and narrowly to this registration of fact. Ideally, of course, by impartial description of an impersonal observer. This raises the question whether we can assume such a narrow view of science. Baldwin says: —

“ All attempts to rule out prospective organization or teleology — the belief in the correspondence between reality and thought — from the world, would be fatal to natural science, which has arisen by a series of provisional retrospective *interpretations* of just this kind of organization: and fatal also to the historical interpretation of the world found in the evolution hypothesis; for the category of teleology thus understood is but the prospective reading of the same series, which *when read retrospectively*, we call evolution.”

We hold, with the old school, that the disclosure of reality comes to us *along with*, nay *in*, *experience*. This is not to do in favor of the prospective

categories what we deny the naturalist the right to do in favor of the retrospective ones.

Professor Baldwin, leading in genetic psychology, seems to favor his branch of investigation, however, when he says in the above-mentioned article: —

“The category of organization by which design proceeds is *also* distinctly an *outcome* of the movement or drift of experience towards the realization of career.”

And also,

“It does not follow that because a mental way of regarding the world, i. e. the way of prospection, is itself a genetic growth, therefore it is a misleading way, for the same might be urged against the categories of descriptive science, i. e. the retrospective, which have had the same origin.”

Quite true, only they are not applied to the *meaning*, the purport, aim, and end of the behavior or process. They do not render a verdict, do not appraise or evaluate the occurrence. Any genetic or developmental account of thinking necessarily makes the thought function utilitarian, instrumental, adaptive. Now, in reducing thought to this function, in genetic accounts as much as in pragmatic philosophy, we lost our regulative standard. Bosanquet's point here is well taken: —

“Because pragmatism says, as I understand, that the only ends of action are those which consist in change wrought upon the external world, and that, to these, cognition is a means. For me, cognition, as a harmony in our experience, has the character of an end of action, *though not the whole end*. But external change is never an end.”

We say the absolute truth comes in along with, nay *in*, the very experience. “If,” says Prof. Creighton, “the nature of a large whole does not function constitutively within it in the form of universal principles, then all tests of truth are impossible, practical tests no less than theoretical. (‘Phil. Rev. XIII,’ p. 290.) As to the nature of the problem — time-honored as it is — there is little trouble in the camp. We are here before an essential issue as to implications. Kant did well to destroy once for all the idea that the First Cause should figure as a mere link to a series of conditions in time and space. But he begged the question in his solution by lifting the Absolute out of all and any relation. We are glad that Kantian thinking made it plain that the question of absolute origin cannot be answered, for the simple reason that it cannot be intelligently asked. But the question which lurks here is exactly that greatest of all problems and may be stated in the simple phrase, ‘How can

the Absolute have change and yet not itself be subject to change?' This is the same question that appears in the controversies on Freedom of Will and Predestination, Time and Eternity, the Many and the One, Becoming and Being.

Now, we want to emphasize at this point that it is *petitio principii* in favor of the time-element to attempt the settlement by bringing the supernatural within the range of the natural. It is just as much so as when the "*negative theologies*" cut the relation asunder and preclude the asking of the question; or as it would be to make all the time-elements divine which seems to be the drift of the compromising endeavors of contemporary thinking.

It is a movement with enough of aggressive boast and assurance. They have the field, their problem is solved by avoiding it. They stand foursquare on the facts of the seen. The *portent* of these very facts and their implications, the home of truth within, and the verdict of conscience are slighted as unavailable for science and are rejected claimants for consideration. The criterion of truth is set aside; the search for absolute, independent truth, and enthusiastic devotion to it, are abated. At this time-junction of commercial activities, which intensify international relations; of industrial development, stimulating trade; of

hustling activity, resplendent with material achievements, the reflective temper is naturally disowned. Speculation is not in favor. We have no *use* for it. Ah, quite so, but of old the question ran, What is the *use of us*? As answered in the Catechism, "The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever." Can we really say, in modern phrase, What's the use? as did Pilate, What is truth? Strenuous activity; unparalleled industrial and commercial development, involving an intercourse which compares and criticises, as it also brings valuable new views,—socializing tendencies, along with the study of social science and psychology, especially in its experimental and analytical field; ethical and moral movements, with demands for social justice—all of these factors have emphasized the reversal of the old question in pragmatic, utilitarian, sometimes (expedient) prudential favor. The question now is, not what is wanted of me, or even of the whole community, but what do I want, and what is serviceable to the welfare of the community. So in theology Christ no more accredits his message, but his message must accredit him. All, even God Almighty, is brought before the bar of man's moral and intellectual judgment. The useful, the serviceable, the expedient, is made ultimate, and—as time and conditions change—it, the very ultimate reality, must

change to follow suit. The one true originating Cause, whom we used to confess as "I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth," has been dethroned. An evolutionary current agoing, a process in the midst of which we find ourselves, is ruling supreme. Origins must take place continually as truly as must sufficient reason, it is said truly, but the inquiry as to the destiny, either of individual or of society, is never made a serious subject of discussion. It involves the *punctum stans*, not of time, and notions of the unconditioned, unchangeableness of God. His sovereignty, predestination, and his eternal decrees are too unyielding, too rigidly exacting, to fit in with this plastic time-juncture. For after all there is a "will-to-believe," and there is nothing profounder on this point than the saying of the Old New England Puritans in regard to belief: "He could if he would, but he could not would." It is plainer and more concrete than Aristotle's description of man as a principle of *desiring thought*, or of *thinking desire*.

In pragmatism, man as thinking desire, is abroad. Bowels and brain have exchanged functions. Our religion is sentimental, not reasoning. Thinking has even been avowedly disclaimed in the Ritschlian motto "Religion without metaphysics." This movement of the Ritschlian the-

ology has coöperated powerfully in this direction, furnishing the new evolution, which *assumes* in clever disguise — whatever be said to the contrary — an anthropocentric position in theology, making man judge and rate according to sentiment and subjective experience. Says Höffding in his “Problems of Philosophy”: “All worth rests on the relation of events and of conditions to life at its different stages, to the existence and evolution of life.” The very nomenclature of the new school of theology is significant in that valuation and practicality is the predominant note. Unfortunately a division is made between the *Werturtheile und Seinurtheile*, the value-judgment and existential judgments, and the *Umwertung aller Werte* is thus allowed free range as no regulative norm can be exercised when value- and existence-judgments are divorced. In the Christian religion pragmatism acts according to the song of Schiller’s “Weltweisen”: —

“Einstweilen, bis den Bau der Welt
Philosophie zusammenhält,
Erhält sich das Getriebe
Durch Hunger und durch Liebe.”

And these are the predominant determinants in the pragmatic religion of to-day, “Hunger und Liebe” in its broadest meaning in their individual

and social significance. "Hunger und Liebe" are *needs*, and for human needs all other authority must go.

Says Dr. Eugen William Lyman, in "The Influence of Pragmatism upon the Status of Theology":—

"The recognition of the mere possibility that new values may arise, which may even be discontinuous with the old, does not mean the recognition that there have already arisen needs calling for such values; it merely asserts the sovereignty of this additional practical need that, when new needs do arise, they should be satisfied by their appropriate values."

It is evident that Professor Lyman feels, however, that "there are bounds of ordinance set for all things, where they must pause or rue it," for he goes on to say: "It is true that the maintenance of a right proportion in values may require the *subordination of new needs*; but at all events," he asserts again, "they must not be suppressed in advance by *a priori* reasoning." To conclude then with a splendid piece of *a priori* reasoning: "This priority of needs to values is already an element in the standard value of Christianity." An eventual need is sufficient warrant for Professor Lyman to disown the traditional Christian philosophy. Indeed one wonders, how loosely he

holds the time-honored formulæ of Christendom, into which were pressed the best judgments of the leading spirits of the ages, to set them aside for a *possible* need, theoretically conceived.

Of course, there are all types and degrees but in all, the *objective reference* by which we reorganize experience is generally afforded by experience itself, and is applied rather by the rule of instinct than by thought. The purposiveness of human thought has found a practical criterion over itself. William Longstreth Raub, in an article "Pragmatism and Kantianism," observes as "the greatest apparent difference between pragmatism and the Kantian theory the fact that in the latter the categories are considered *a priori* notions of the understanding, while for the pragmatists they are derived from experience." We are no more searching for truth; we are engaged in making it.

Nietzsche proclaimed philosophic virtue to reside in taste, in the appetite which gives birth to the desire, which creates a preference for a determined thing, and assigns to this thing its rank and value. This had gone wrong under Christian influence, therefore he set about in the "Umwertung aller Werte."

The German boast that this "valuation-theology," as it might be aptly called, would carry the

Anglo-Saxon world within one generation, has almost literally come true. And America especially has given way to it. Dr. James Orr has done great service to the Church by his able criticism of the Ritschlian Theology. Of all the British theologians he was the only one who thoroughly familiarized himself with this dangerous movement, and persistently attacked it. (Garvie's book "Ritschlian Theology" is a later sympathetic exposition of Ritschlianism.) Indeed, the evangelical faith of Scotland and of the world owes gratitude to the labors of Professor Orr in its defense.

According to Mr. Schiller, who "dabbles in pragmatism," as Professor Baldwin truly remarks, the true is the useful, the efficient, the workable; but again needs, instincts, wants, play a large part. Man, grown large, displaces God's sovereignty. The former notion of Absolute is displaced by that of a concrete or functional absolute. The notion of static perfection has given way to a perfection which may be defined as inexhaustible capacity for development. "The Absolute of to-day is perfect in the sense of embodying infinite potentialities, potencies, promises for the future." There is no such thing as final consummation. Everything is in the making. The glory in the imper-

fect, in the changing forms is proclaimed. Logically the very evolution runs to an uncertain end. But logic has been ruled out of court, and very chaos is the glory of the disciples of pragmatism. They seem to rejoice in beclouding and befuddling themselves with vague phrases. What only a few years ago was considered even with evolution-enthusiasts a serious problem, is now discarded by Prof. Heath Bawden with the slangy words: "We don't know where we're going, but we're on the way" (p. 44 "Principles of Pragmatism.")

I fully understand Prof. MacBride Sterrett's terse qualification in characterizing this school: "What now is the fundamental principle of this extravagantly vaunted new theory that is styled pragmatism? As one reads most of these volumes, he becomes dazed and bewildered and ends with very vague ideas of what the thing really means. First these pragmatists give us to understand that truth as an objective system-truth, the search for which has been the object of all science and philosophy is a mere cobweb of the intellect. Second, that all our judgments of reality are worth- or value-judgments. What is called truth and reality consists in bare practical effects. In science, for instance, if it serves our practical pur-

poses, better to use the Ptolemaic instead of the Copernican theory in astronomy, then it is the true and real for us. In morals, if honesty is the best policy, then honesty is the truth. In philosophy, if we can get more out of our moral and religious life by believing in polytheism instead of monotheism, then polytheism is the truth, which is practically the view of Professor Howison and Professor James and Professor Schiller. The *cui bono* scales are to give us the validity of judgments in all spheres. Reasonableness of truth is not a good in itself. It is an abstraction. There is no truth, no absolute system of truth, independent of the needs of men. Love of such supposed truth, which has always been the inspiration of thinkers, is rudely taken from us as the worship of a false God. Such truth is useless and the useless is false. We can say that what is true in pragmatism is not new, and what is new in it — the attempt to substitute value-judgment in all cognition for judgments of truth and reality — is not true." ("The Freedom of Authority," p. 311 ff.)

However, in the words of the poet:

"Our little systems have their day.
They have their day and cease to be.
They are but broken lights of Thee;
And Thou O Lord art more than they."

Be this our comforting assurance in regard to pragmatism. For there must be something very static and secure after all, which holds even in our day the pragmatic theologians. The notion of the Kingdom of God looms large as the ordering, ruling function of God's fixed plan in this world. Pragmatists somehow trust to this as secure in the midst of the flux of experience. It is, as Tennyson says:

“One God, one law, one element,
And one far-off divine event
To which the whole creation moves.”

Or their boundless faith in the rationality of the universe falls to the ground. But what the poet expresses in sentiment,—

“Ob Alles in ewigem Wechsel kreist
Es beharret im Wechsel ein ruhiger Geist,”

what faith sings in profound conviction,—

“Change and decay in all around I see;
O Thou who changest not, abide with me,”

that we believe to be true to fact.

The theologians of the old school, to be sure, meanwhile have to await the general recognition of the actuality of Perfection, the Truth as it is in Jesus, who said, “I am the Way, the Truth,

and the Life." But we are confident that "Jesus, ruler of all nature, of God and man the son," will be acknowledged again by Christians as the concrete personal standard of perfection when Christian experience shall have deepened. Whatever else may be in the making, let us hope that His Light will create order out of the chaotic state of contemporary religion. Yet, if this is to be, "it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy."

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